A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, April 19. 1712.

I Have always desir'd to make this Paper useful to two purposes among many others; 1. To inform the Prejudic'd and Ignorant; 2. To Vindicate and Defend injur'd and oppress'd Innocence; and both these are best done, by setting Truth in a clear Light, that indifferent and impartial Men may judge for themselves, and be no more hood-wink'd and deceiv'd by the Fictions, Falsities, and Party-Glosses, which are daily put upon Matters of Fact, by those, who having private Interests to carry on, find it convenient to cover Truth of Fact with a Cloud of Misrelation, and Misrepresentation, to the Prejudice of Mankind, who ought to be rightly Informed, and to the Irreparable Injury of those they Represent.

As this indeed relates to the Affairs of the *Dissenters* in *England*, and the Establish'd Church in *Scotland*, I must divide it into its proper Heads; I am now upon the latter

I gave you in *Review* No.... an Account of the True and only Foundation, upon which the Episcopal Party in *Scotland*, pretend that they have the Majority of the People on their Side; *viz.* The Tyranny and Oppression exercised by the Landlords over their Tenants; I told you then, I could

could give Instances of it, Name and Sir-Name, and having been Challenged since, to do so, I answer'd the Challenge in the last *Review* but one; and not to make this Paper a long History of these Things, which indeed would fill a Volume by itself; that Instance, which I have very good Documents to prove, may be sufficient, being done by two Noble-Men well known.

If this be not sufficient to prove, by what means this Episcopal Majority, *if it be so*, is obtain'd, or what Endeavours they use to obtain it, I may, upon Demand, give you many more such, and some worse.

The Instance above, I had upon the following Occasion; We had, in a late *Post-Boy*, an Act of the Presbytery of *Brechin*, publish'd, wherein they assign'd Reasons, besides those in the Queen's Proclamation, for keeping a Fast; *one was*, The horrid Prophanation of the Lord's Day, openly and avowedly practis'd by those Magistrates, whose Duty it was to punish it in others; *the other was*, The Lording it over Men's Consciences, &c. *The first* Respects a famous Sabbath-Day Drunkenness, practised in a Town, where the Magistrates, in defiance of God and Man, publickly, *way, and constantly, which is worse* pray for the Pretender in their Sabbath-Day Worship, *and make themselves Drunk at Night*; this is that most Infamous Meeting, called the *Maire of Montrose*, of which I shall give a brief, but full History, in a very little Time: *The Second*, viz. *Lording over Conscience*, is, I think, sufficiently Exemplify'd in the Story above noted, which thereby serves this double purpose; 1. To prove the Practice, and 2. To prove the Design; *First*, To Vindicate the *Presbyteries* Act, and *Secondly*, To demonstrate by what Method Episcopacy and Common-Prayer is to be set up in *Scotland*, and how the pretended Majority of the People is to be procur'd.

I come now to another Point, in which it is most Necessary to undeceive the Unthinking People of this Nation, who seem surprized to hear, that some of the Ministers of the Church of *Scotland refuse the Abjuration*——This is such a Scare-Crow among us, and so Improved by a Party, that I am sorry to see *honest People especially*, so Ignorant in the Fact, so very willing to Censure them for it, and yet so Careless to be rightly Inform'd, *but it is the Sin of the Age*, to take up Reproach without Evidence, and to judge of a Matter before they hear it.

It is true, that there are several Ministers in the Church of *Scotland*, I say *Presbyterian* Ministers, who scruple taking the Abjuration: But, pray, Gentlemen, before you run away with the Thing *in Bulk*, look into the Particulars; Must it needs follow that they must be *Jacobites* for this?—No, no, *quite the contrary*; the Case turns upon quite another Foot; you are pretty much addicted to take Oaths and other Things too, in *England*, *as you take a Physical Bolus, or gilded Pill, viz.* Swallow it by the Lump, leaving it to the Doctor to Compound it of what Drugs he thinks fit: But in *Scotland* it is not so; Oaths, however in *England* made familiar by Custom, a Crime I believe Heaven has not yet done Punishing us for; yet in *Scotland* it is otherwise, they preserve there, their Awful Reverence, and do not slide down Men's Throats as they do here——As they keep them strictly when taken, so they Examin them thoroughly *before they take them*; and I must own it seems most probable to me, that those who are most Concern'd in Examining into what they Swear, *before they do it*, will be most strictly severe in observing what they swear to, *when they have sworn it*.

It is manifest to all the World, and the Queen has, upon the Assembly's late Address, a-new declar'd her Satisfaction on that Head, *viz.* That the Scruples of the *Presbyterians* in the taking the Abjuration, respect not at all the Pretender, nor do the Friends of the Pretender's Interest, promise themselves any Thing from it; the *Presbyterians* care not how fast you bind them a-

gainst

gainſt the Pretender; nay, if you were to leave them to frame an Oath for themſelves, againſt the Pretender, I dare ſay they would make it more ſevere, and more binding againſt the Pretender and againſt all his Adherents, than we have made it, or perhaps by our Law could have made it.

But the *Abjuration Oath* was made *before the Union*, and ſome Clauſes in it, which regard the Limitation of the Succeſſor, which they think are in Prejudice of the *Preſbyterian* Church, and of the *Preſbyterian* Principles, they cannot but Scruple; and let any Man but enquire how ſmall an Amendment it was that they deſir'd in the late Act, he will ſoon be Convinc'd of what I ſay, *viz.* The Word WHICH, for the Word AS, for Example; the Abjuration ſays, you ſhall Maintain and Support the Succeſſion in the Houſe of *Hanover*, *As it ſtands Limited by ſeveral Acts of Parliament in* England, and ſo goes on to recite thoſe Acts which Limit the Succeſſor.

One of thoſe Acts, it ſeems, Limits the Succeſſor to be of the Church of *England*, and to take the Sacrament in the Church of *England*; *now may not a* Scot's-*Man ſay*, ——Tho' I do not Scruple the Succeſſor for his being of the Church of *England*, tho' I am quiet if never any Succeſſor ſhould be of the *Preſbyterian* Perſuaſion, yet is it not hard, that if any Succeſſor of the Houſe of *Hannover* ſhould be a *Preſbyterian*, *however unlikely that may be*, that I ſhould be oblig'd to Abjure him, *as ſuch*, and forſwear my Allegiance to him, meerly for being a *Preſbyterian*, when I am a Member of a *Preſbyterian* Church myſelf? Let us make this Caſe our own, ſhould we not think it very hard?

Now what's this to *Jacobitiſm* and the *Pretender*? And what is the Difference between, *as it ſtands Limited*, and *which ſtands Limited*, that we ſhould refuſe ſo far to gratifie a National Scruple, and then that you ſhould Condemn your Brethren as *Jacobites*, for ſuch a Scruple?

To enter no farther into theſe Things, let no Man be deceived in the *Preſbyterians* of *Scotland*; however they were againſt the Union, however they ſcruple the Abjuration, however they may be Exaſperated at the Treatment they now meet with from us, you may force them to many Inconveniencies, but you cannot force them to Embrace the Pretender: They have been for many Ages a Suffering People, an Injur'd, an Oppreſs'd People, but you can never charge them with being Enclin'd to a *Popiſh* Succeſſor, or in the leaſt to favour the Intereſt of the Pretender; and one would wonder at the Unanimous Appearance of the *Preſbyterians* againſt the Pretender, tho' under great Neglects and Diſcouragements, at the Time of the late Invaſion, ſhould be ſo ſoon forgotten, when the Inhabitants of *Edinburgh* Subſcrib'd in leſs than one Week for the Raiſing a large Regiment of Foot, for her Majeſty's Service; when 180 Men out of 200 in one Pariſh, gave their Hands to appear in Arms; when One and All, they Reſolved everywhere to Fight to the laſt drop, againſt the Pretender, in Defence of the Queen and the Succeſſion: —— Let them ſhew how many of the Epiſcopal People offer'd their Service at that Time; and whether they did not openly teſtifie their Joy, at the approach of a *Popiſh Uſurper*? —— Let theſe Things be Impartially laid before the World, and as her Majeſty did clearly then ſo others would clearly now, ſee and know the Queen's Friends in *Scotland*, from her Enemies.

But this is not an Age, it ſeems, when Juſtice, much leſs Gratitude, ſhall take place among us, eſpecially to that hated Thing call'd a *Preſbyterian*; of which more in its place.

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